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PRESS CLIPPINGS

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Saturday, August 27, 2005

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #12 (SO12)

(Conflict Reduced in Mindanao and Other Areas Vulnerable to Violence)

USAID turns over infra projects to LGUs

Senior US government officials visited Basilan province on Tuesday to turn over to local organizations the latest in their targeted investment program to support economic development and peace in Central and Western Mindanao.

In Lamitan, the location of intense fighting between the Philippine military and the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group in 2001, an expanded berthing facility and a new Ro-Ro ramp will provide a gateway for local producers to ship

their goods to the Mindanao mainland and also offer improved passenger services for local and neighboring residents.

The improved Lamitan Port features a new Roll-on Roll-off (Ro-Ro) ramp, mooring facilities, and breasting dolphins. This economic infrastructure project is one of about 40 Mid-Scale Infrastructure Projects that will be undertaken by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through a partnership between its

Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program and local governments.

At the inauguration ceremony, United States Chargé d'Affaires Ambassador (CDA Amb.) Darryl Johnson underscored the importance of economic infrastructure in generating economic growth and expanding economic opportunity to sustain peace in the region.

“We know that ultimate responsibility for economic progress in this region rests with

local leaders and the people themselves. We are truly pleased to be able to help those who are committed to peace in Mindanao, and who have the vision to see a brighter tomorrow,” Johnson said.

The inauguration ceremony was also attended by USAID's new mission director Jon Lindborg; Robert Wuertz, chief of USAID's Office of Economic Development and Governance; Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar, Lamitan Mayor Roderick Furigay, other community leaders and residents.

(Source: Manila Standard Today, 8/27/05, page A6)